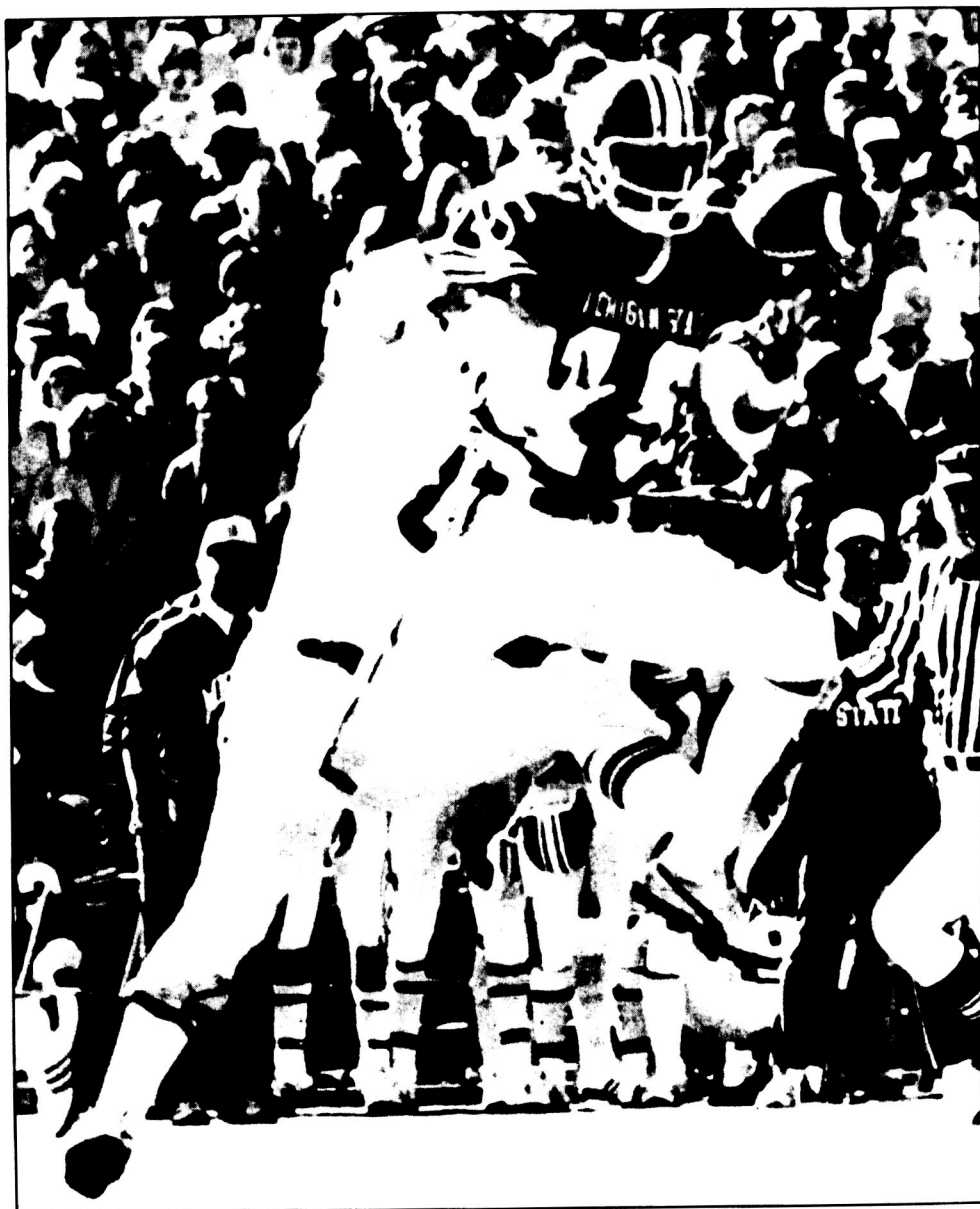


SPECIAL STATE NEWS SPORTS SECTION

MSU v. Minnesota





State News/Ira Strickstein
Spartan defensive tackle Tanya Webb leads a host of tacklers in stopping Illinois running back Wayne Strader (23) in MSU's 59-19 win Saturday.

'Strong' Gophers pose threat to hot Spartans

By JOE CENTERS
State News Sports Writer

On paper, Minnesota doesn't measure up to much of an opponent for MSU in Saturday's 1 p.m. clash at Spartan Stadium; but get them on a scale and watch Spartan coach Darryl Rogers cringe.

"There are a lot of things that scare us about Minnesota," Rogers said. "One, they are the largest football team we've played since Southern California. They're also the most physical team we've played since Southern California."

The Gophers have a 4-4 record, 3-2 in the Big Ten, and they are coming off a big come-from-behind win over Indiana last Saturday.

In the game, Indiana held a 24-0 lead but Minnesota battled back and capped off the rally with a 31-yard field goal by Paul Rogind with two seconds remaining to win the game, 32-31.

Quarterback Mark Carlson has run the offense most of the season, but when the Gophers got into trouble Saturday, they called on reserve Wendell Avery who threw for two touchdowns in the comeback.

"Avery is a scrambler and can throw the football and Carlson is the director," Rogers said.

Both have seen considerable time this season, and both can throw the ball with accuracy. Carlson has completed 60 out of 102 passes, while Avery has connected on 35 of 67 passes he's thrown.

In the backfield, the Gophers have a powerful one-two punch of tailback Marion Barber, from Detroit, and fullback Kent Kitzmann.

"They run the sweep with Marion Barber," Rogers said. "They're able to move the football because they're so big and they slug it out."

If there's anyone who will slug it out, it's the 6-foot-2 1/2, 204-pound Kitzmann. In Minnesota's game against Illinois last season, Kitzmann set an NCAA record by carrying the ball 57 times. He gained 266 yards that day then came back the next week against Wisconsin and ran the ball 40 times for 154 yards.

Probably the greatest offensive weapon the Gophers have is their kicker, Rogind, who played high school football at Farmington Harrison.

Rogind was second in the nation last year in field goals, 18, and in percentage, 26 attempts. This season, he is 18 for 18 in extra points and seven for 10 in field goals.

MSU is also coming off a big win. Last week the Spartans demolished Illinois, but most of that point spread came in the fourth quarter. The Illini jumped out to a 12-0 lead early in the first quarter, and trailed only 24-19 with less than a minute to go in the third quarter, but a 28-point explosion by the Spartans in the final stanza made for the closest 40-point win that Rogers said he has ever seen.

MSU has won its four last games, and the (continued on page 11)

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There's more to Eddie Smith than the game of football

By BETH TUSCHAK
State News Staff Writer

Sitting on the cement sidewalk outside Spartan Stadium in thirty degree weather, quarterback Eddie Smith seems content, in his element.

What's Eddie Smith all about?

Is he a paragon on the football field who, with a little help from his friends, has grabbed a few moments of glory for the Spartans and run for all he's worth?

A dumb jock? A nice guy? A ladies man? A hero? An average Joe? Some of the above, all of the above, none of the above?

Smith, a well-spoken man, whose eyes are as expressive as his slightly accented Southern speech, says right now his life revolves around school, football, friends, some dating and his family.

Time for dating?

"Football players aren't always tired," Smith said.

Most of them take time to make time on the weekends.

Smith is quick to admit that football has been a major part of his life since fifth grade but also adds he is doing well as an advertising major, carries a respectable grade average and doesn't spend all his time dreaming about making it big in pro ball.

"Right now one of my goals is to get through my last four classes and graduate in June which will give me a small assurance that I can get a job," Smith said.

"My main goal isn't to play pro football, but if the chance comes I'll probably give it a try."

Playing a good game of college football has helped mold Smith's personality — he enjoys being recognized on campus and in East Lansing and says meeting lots of people is a big plus to his life.

"I enjoy talking to anybody and everybody and really like it when people come up to me and introduce themselves," Smith said.

He realizes a lot of people talk to him because he is a football player, and a star, but says if he didn't enjoy the social feedback he wouldn't play the game.

Smith also gets tremendous feedback and support from his

family — his parents have only missed three home games during his MSU career and his two older brothers travel from Pittsburgh, Pa. whenever they can.

"People are what it's all about," Smith said, "because when there's 60,000 screaming nuts from MSU yelling at you, it gets your blood going."

"I can't hear the words, just the roar, but when we play at Spartan Stadium I'm where I'd rather be than any place in the world."

And with good reason.

In the four years that Spartan fans have been cheering him on, Smith has broken MSU records galore — yards gained passing, passes attempted and completed, touchdown passes thrown and yards gained rushing-passing.

Not to be outdone, he also holds the record for passes intercepted.

Every time Smith throws the ball he sets a new record and the statistics speak louder than words.

In his first eight games Smith has thrown 196 times with 119 completions and seven interceptions.

He's connected for 1,606 yards and 14 touchdowns and against Indiana threw a 86 yard touchdown to receiver Kirk Gibson.

Although he's good, some say great, Smith says he doesn't think he's a serious candidate for the Heisman trophy.

He's betting on Charles Alexander, running back for Louisiana State University, or Oklahoma tailback Billy Sims.

"I'm not saying I wouldn't like to be a contender," Smith said, "because it would be nice and I'd appreciate it. But right now, I think it's an impossibility."

Recognition and records are gratifying, but what boggles his mind the most Smith said was people actually going out, buying a card and a stamp, and mailing a note "thanking" him for playing a good game.

"One woman wrote me and said our win over Michigan was the best graduation present she could have gotten," Smith said.

"That gave me a glow that still hasn't worn off."

Cover photo
by
Kim VanderVeer



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MSU's baton twirlers not twins

**Kathy and Nancy
Skelton sisters
11 monthes apart**

Kathy and Nancy Skelton, baton twirlers for the MSU marching band, have been mistakenly reported as being twins by publications in the Lansing area.

"There was a picture of us twirling in the State Journal and the caption read, 'the twin baton twirlers of MSU,'" Kathy said.

"Our heads were in the air so you could not see our faces," Nancy said, "but I don't know how that rumor got started. We are just sisters 11 months apart."

Kathy, 21, a senior majoring in political science, first tried out for baton twirling at MSU when she was a senior in high school. She was accepted to the MSU team during her sophomore year.

Her twirling partner at the time of her acceptance was a graduate student who left MSU the following year. Nancy, 20, was accepted as her sister's partner in her sophomore year.

"Working with my other partner was nice," Kathy said. "But when my sister was accepted it was lots of fun."

"It was easier to practice our routines since we lived in the same house," Nancy said. "And since we have practiced under the same person our style is pretty similar."

"We have a smoother style," Kathy said. "I'm not sure what the criteria was (for choosing the twirlers) but I know they wanted twirlers who had the same style."

"There are various styles of baton twirling such as speedy, smooth and glamorous," she explained. "The speedy style looks very impressive to viewers because of the quickness of the hand. The smoother style shows greater detail and the glamorous, well they didn't pick us because we were sex symbols."

The Skeltons began baton twirling when they were five years old.

"As we got older we became more serious about twirling," Kathy said.

"We have competed in various twirling contests around the world and at the age of 16 we won the World Duet Championship," Kathy explained.

"But our competing days are more or less over now," Kathy said. "We usually spend our summers teaching baton twirlers in camps. And when I graduate if I don't decide what I will go into, I can always become a professional twirling teacher."



JOE CENTERS

Grab the 'binocs' next rout

Now that the MSU football team is making a habit of running away with its games — the Spartans have outscored their last three opponents 163-35 — you have the opportunity to look at the game through a different perspective.

The next time a game is out of reach, forget about trying to watch the whole field, just focus on a single player. Ideally, the thing to do is to get a pair of binoculars and pick out one person. That way, you can decide for yourself just how good that player really is.

The best time to try something like this is when one of the specialty teams is on the field. The kickoffs are usually where you can find the best hitting of the game.

Take a look at number 39 for MSU, freshman George Cooper. Against Illinois Saturday, Cooper made six tackles in only eight kickoffs that the

Spartans had. Keep an eye on number five, senior Mike Hans. He has been a standout for three years on the specialty teams and he is usually in on most of the tackles.

Most of all on the kickoffs, try to focus on kicker Rick Schario. Many kickers will boot the ball then head straight for the sidelines. Not Schario. That's all he gets to do so he makes the best of his opportunities. He'll usually be around the ball carrier.

When the other team is kicking an extra point, keep an eye on Mike Marshall. He will line up on the end and he usually gets a free shot at blocking the kick. Saturday, he barely missed blocking Dave Finzer's extra point after Illinois' first touchdown, but he bothered Finzer enough to make him miss the kick.

On the offense, watch one of the interior linemen. If a play breaks down, more times than

not it is because someone missed a block.

Senior tackle Jim Hinesly is fun to watch. Against Illinois, he was destroying everyone who lined up against him. He will be the first one to admit that maybe the competition against him wasn't that good, but sure didn't give any of the Illini a break.

Try to see what the backs do when they don't run the ball, or what the receivers do when

they don't go out for a pass.

Kirk Gibson is always good for a crunching block or two during a game when he is not catching the ball.

Watch quarterback Eddie Smith. See if he carries out all of his fakes when he passes, and see if he tips off the defense when there's going to be a running play. The longer Smith can disguise his plays, the greater the chances are of the play working.

Check out the defense. Try to figure out all of the different stunts and formations they run. Look how close that noseguard Bernard Hay will line up to the center. Sometimes you would swear his and the center's

helmets are touching before the ball is snapped. Watch Melvin "Juice" Land on the option. A couple times against Illinois, he took the whole backfield out by himself.

Follow linebacker Dan Bass for a few plays. More times than not, he'll be in the middle of the tackle. Watch safety Mark Anderson wander around in the secondary, he doesn't make a whole lot of tackles, but the ones he does are usually big ones.

Obviously there isn't enough time, even if you single out players the whole game, to watch everyone. But try it the next time the game is a

(continued on page 11)

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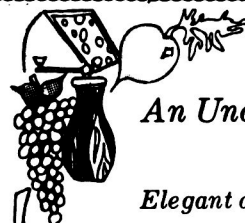
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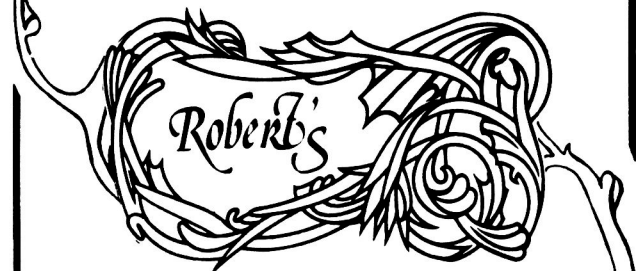
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Offense

SE	84	Eugene Byrd, 6-0, 178, Jr.
LT	73	Jim Hinesly, 6-3, 254, Sr.
LG	66	Mike Densmore, 6-3, 257, Jr.
C	67	Matt Foster, 6-3, 228, Jr.
RG	69	Rod Strata, 6-2, 240, So.
RT	76	Craig Lonce, 6-3, 246, Jr.
TE	91	Mark Brammer, 6-4, 233, Jr.
QB	7	Eddie Smith, 6-0, 174, Sr.
TB	20	Steve Smith, 5-8, 175, So.
FB	44	Lonnie Middleton, 6-1, 217, Jr.
FL	23	Kirk Gibson, 6-2, 217, Sr.

Defense

OLB	57	Larry Savage, 6-3, 213, Jr.
LT	98	Tanya Webb, 6-7, 254, Jr.
MG	93	Bernard Hay, 6-3, 235, So.
RT	47	Melvin Land, 6-3, 240, Sr.
OLB	40	John McCormick, 6-2, 211, So.
ILB	50	Mike Decker, 6-2, 224, Jr.
ILB	49	Dan Bass, 6-1, 221, Jr.
LCB	28	Jim Burroughs, 6-1, 183, So.
SS	10	Tom Graves, 6-3, 211, Sr.
WS	16	Mark Anderson, 6-2, 189, Jr.
RCB	2	Mike Marshall, 6-2, 190, So.

Defense

LE	5	Stan Sytsma, 6-2, 228, Sr.
LT	95	Alan Blanshan, 6-5, 251, Jr.
NG	65	Doug Friberg, 6-3, 228, Sr.
RT	98	Jim Ronan, 6-5, 249, Sr.
RE	88	Tom Murphy, 6-2, 218, Jr.
WLB	59	Don Meyer, 6-2, 219, Jr.
SLB	36	Ed Burns, 6-1, 212, Sr.
CB	17	Ken Foxworth, 5-11, 176, Jr.
CB	21	Brian Snyder, 5-10, 172, Sr.
SS	34	Keith Brown, 5-11, 192, Sr.
FS	11	Keith Edwards, 5-11, 201, Jr.

Offense

TE	83	Glenn Bourquin, 6-3, 231, Jr.
LT	68	Marty Stein, 6-4, 247, Jr.
LG	52	Darell Schwen, 6-4, 232, Jr.
C	53	Steve Tobin, 6-4, 247, Jr.
RG	60	Pat Paquette, 6-5, 259, So.
RT	63	Greg Murtha, 6-6, 251, Sr.
SE	20	Elmer Bailey, 6-0, 193, Jr.
QB	12	Mark Carlson, 5-11, 186, Jr.
TB	41	Marion Barber, 6-2, 204, So.
FB	44	Kent Kitzmann, 6-2, 204, Jr.
SB	42	Ray Dillio, 6-0, 203, Jr.

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The Spartans

1	Jerome Stanton, DB	52	Steve Otis, ILB
2	Mike Marshall, DB	53	Angelo Fields, DT
3	Richard Schario, PK	54	Mark Tapling, C
4	Samson Howard, SE	55	Jody McCulloh, OG
5	Mike Hans, FB	56	Tom Piette, C
6	Mark Jones, SE	57	Larry Savage, OLB
7	Ed Smith, QB	59	Sedric Audas, C
8	Morten Andersen, PK	60	Jack Kirkling, MG
9	Ken Robinson, DB	61	Ed Stanton, OT
10	Tom Graves, DB	62	Bryan Boak, OG
11	John Vielhaber, FL	63	Dave Whittle, OT
12	Bob Stachowicz, QB	64	Eric Jones, DT
14	Bryan Clark, QB	65	Mike Sciarini, OG
15	Bert Vaughn, QB	66	Mike Densmore, OG
16	Mark Anderson, DB	67	Matt Foster, C
17	Tony Harris, DB	68	Joe Harewicz, OG
18	Terry Williams, DB	69	Rod Strata, OG
19	Ray Stachowicz, P	70	Jeff Fehlan, OT
20	Steve Smith, TB	71	Marvin Mantos, OG
21	Craig Raye, FL	72	Jeff Wiska, OG
22	Leroy McGee, TB	73	Jim Hinesly, OT
23	Kirk Gibson, FL	74	Jim Kaiser, OT
24	Curt Griffin, OLB	75	Ted Grabenhorst, OT
25	Mike Jones, FL	76	Craig Lonce, OT
26	Todd Scarlett, DB	77	Regis McQuaide
27	Al Davis, DB	79	Scot Mazur, OT
28	Jim Burroughs, DB	80	Charlie Shafer, TE
29	Rickey Greene, DB	81	Brett Sheeran, DT
30	Bruce Reeves, TB	82	Craig Saunders, TE
32	Van Williams, DB	83	Barry Harris, FL
33	Tony Kolodziej, ILB	84	Eugene Byrd, SE
34	Terry McDowell, ILB	85	Jim Williams, SE
38	Darryl Brown, OLB	86	Johnny Lee Haynes, OLB
39	George Cooper, OLB	88	Ron Mitchem, DT
40	John McCormick, OLB	89	Ike Griffin, DT
41	Darrin McClelland, FB	91	Mark Brammer, TE
42	Derek Hughes, TB	92	Pat Mitten, DT
43	Steve Maidlow, ILB	93	Bernard Hay, MG
44	Lonnie Middleton, FB	94	Ben Baca, DT
45	Andy Schramm, FB	95	Al Kimichik, TE
47	Melvin Land, DT	96	Calvin Perkins, OT
48	Mike Muster, ILB	97	Craig Converse, MG
49	Dan Bass, ILB	98	Tanya Webb, DT
50	Mike Decker, ILB	99	Bruce Williams, MG
51	Joe Jacquemain, C		



Rosters



The Gophers

1	Wendell Avery, QB	46	Duane Gregory, TB
2	Elwin Burdette, CB	47	Mark Soutor, FS
3	Glen Howard, LB	48	Jeff Thompson, FB
4	Jim Marcella, SE	50	Dave Gardner, DT
5	Stan Sytsma, DE	51	Brad Odegard, C
6	Bill Prairie, FS	52	Darell Schwen, OG
7	Mark Tonn, QB	53	Steve Tobin, C
8	John Hoffman, SS	55	Ken Wypyszynski, C
9	Gary White, FB	56	Jack Johnson, LB
10	Greg Pylatiuk, QB	57	Tom Fitzpatrick, C
11	Keith Edwards, FS	58	Chris Bebel, OG
12	Mark Carlson, QB	59	Don Meyer, LB
13	Paul Rogind, K	60	Pat Paquette, OG
15	Terry Simmons, TE-P	61	Mike Orgas, OG
16	Angus McNeely, SE	62	Jim Anderson, OG
17	Ken Foxworth, CB	63	Greg Murtha, OT
18	John Coatta, QB	64	Scott Farnes, OG
19	Walter Jones, SE	65	Doug Friberg, NG
20	Elmer Bailey, WB	66	Scott Harms, OG
21	Brian Snyder, CB	67	Rick Dahlson, OG
22	Gary Breault, CB	68	Marty Stein, OT
23	Dana Noel, CB	69	Kent Penovich, OT
24	Larry Marko, P	70	Steve Cunningham, DE
25	Lance Marcuson, TB	71	Todd Goettsche, OT
26	Roger Fraizer, SE	72	Ken Dallafior, OT
27	Brian Hairston, CB	73	Mark Owens, DT
28	Tom Smith, P	77	McKinley Nash, OT
29	Tom Johnson, LB	78	Mike Weinzierl, DT
30	Felix Williams, LB	79	Jeff Snodgrass, DT
31	Steve Breault, WB	81	Randy Sonnenfeld, TE
32	Curt Bach, LB	83	Glenn Bourquin, TE
33	Kurt Mangum, DE	86	Jeff Anhorn, SE
34	Kieth Brown, SS	88	Tom Murphy, DE
35	Kevin Peters, FB	89	John Fahnhorst, LB
36	Ed Burns, LB	90	Mark Allison, DE
37	Glenn Lewis, TB	91	Mike Nielson, DT
38	Brent Harms, LB	92	John Kukuk, NG
39	Jeff Carr, NG	94	Eric Kleinberg, NG
40	Roy Atis, TB	95	Al Blanshan, DT
41	Marion Barber, TB	96	Jeff Schuh, DE
42	Ray Dilulo, WB	97	Thomond O'Brien, DE
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TOTAL OFFENSE		STATS		TOTAL OFFENSE	
MSU	RUSH PASS TOTAL			Minnesota	RUSH PASS TOTAL
FOES	1,745 2,000 3,745			Foes	1,504 1,240 2,744
RUSHING	1,552 1,100 2,652			RUSHING	1,424 1,112 2,536
Steve Smith	ATT YDS AVG TD			Marion Barber	ATT YDS AVG TD
Leroy McGee	81 483 6.0 5			Kent Kitzmann	158 791 5.1 5
Derek Hughes	57 352 6.2 3			Roy Artis	100 339 3.4 4
Bruce Reeves	25 245 9.8 3			PASSING	51 229 4.5 3
Lonnie Middleton	52 215 4.1 3			Mark Carlson	ATT COMP YDS INT TD
PASSING	45 174 3.9 4			Wendell Avery	102 60 698 8 6
Ed Smith	ATT COMP YDS TD INT			RECEIVING	67 35 437 4 8
Kirk Gibson	196 119 1,606 14 7			Elmer Bailey	PR YDS AVG TD
RECEIVING	PR YDS AVG TD			Glenn Bourquin	21 359 17.1 3
Eugene Byrd	29 592 20.4 5			Marion Barber	17 265 15.6 1
Mark Brammer	28 503 18.0 3			PUNTING	14 117 8.4 2
Leroy McGee	26 306 11.8 2			NO YDS AVG LG	
Samson Howard	12 99 8.2 0			Tom Smith	41 1,468 35.8 50
PUNTING	8 175 21.9 3			TACKLES	UT AT TOT
Ray Stachowicz	NO YDS AVG LG			Ed Burns	50 30 80
TACKLES	31 1,360 43.9 75			Jack Johnson	39 20 59
Dan Bass	UT AT TOT			Keith Brown	32 21 52
Mel Land	56 42 98				
Bernard Hay	40 34 74				
	30 28 58				

BIG TEN STANDINGS

	Big Ten	Overall	SATURDAY'S GAMES:
Purdue	5 0 0	7 1 0	Minnesota at MSU
Michigan	4 1 0	7 1 0	Michigan at Northwestern
Ohio State	4 1 0	5 2 1	Purdue at Wisconsin
MSU	4 1 0	5 3 0	Illinois at Ohio State
Minnesota	3 2 0	4 4 0	Iowa at Indiana
Wisconsin	2 3 1	4 3 1	
Indiana	2 3 0	3 5 0	
Iowa	1 4 0	1 7 0	
Illinois	0 4 2	1 6 2	
N'western	0 6 1	0 8 1	

REMAINING GAMES:

Nov. 18	Nov. 25
MSU at Northwestern	Iowa at MSU
Purdue at Michigan	Michigan at Ohio State
Ohio State at Indiana	Indiana at Purdue
Wisconsin at Iowa	Minnesota at Wisconsin
Illinois at Minnesota	Northwestern and Illinois idle

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JAMES L. SMITH

The only thing to do— road trip

Probably the only thing better than seeing the Spartan football team play at home is seeing them play when they are on the road.

Twice this year I have had the pleasure of seeing MSU's gridders playing in enemy territory. The first, Ann Arbor, put me in such a euphoric state that I have very nearly forgotten details surrounding the trip.

The second, to see the crying Illini at Champaign, Ill., lives vividly in my memory.

First of all, Champaign is no short jaunt, it's a good day's drive even when one poaches a little on the ridiculous 55 mph speed limit forever inflicted upon us by President Nixon.

So at noon we (myself, a photographer, a sports writer and a friend) put East Lansing in the rear view mirror and started out on our weekend odyssey.

The sports editor was waiting in Kalamazoo, where he had gone the night before to rake leaves at his mother's house or some other nonsense reason that isn't really important.

Almost to Charlotte someone cries out "Big Mac attack" and the journey stops momentarily to fill up on junk food.

Kalamazoo — 2 p.m. Sports editor throws his bag into my already bulging trunk, throws a few basketballs into a too-low hoop and the junket is back on the road.

Three more stops for liquid refreshments, personal comfort and finally gasoline and my Ford crosses the Illinois state line about 4:30 p.m. (Central time)

With five people in a car which is built to comfortably hold three there is an inordinate amount of complaining about sore legs, derrieres and

my smoking. No shortage of bad tasteless jokes either. I'll spare you the one about the trout.

After paying 20 cents to use a rutted off-ramp, we head south to our destination, which is still two and one-half hours away. With a quintet of people, all of whom except the driver had imbibed a little too much, the car passed everything on the road except the rest stops.

Finally pulling into Rantoul, Ill., we checked into our two-person room with sleeping bags and ferocious appetites.

Rantoul's only claim to fame is that it's 15 miles out of Champaign, which is exactly where we headed after emptying the car of cans, potato chip bags, maps and other now-useless trash.

Champaign, whose claim to fame is that it's 15 miles out of Rantoul, was jumping with homecoming activities which for us translated into long lines at every gin mill we attempted to enter.

Trying to be inconspicuous despite our green-and-white hats, Michigan State shirts and jackets we found ourselves constantly bombarded by Illini fans who pleaded with us not to beat them by 100 points. As if we had any say over the potency of State's offense.

After wandering through downtown Champaign, both blocks of it, we tired of standing in lines and opted for the dim lights of Rantoul.

Two of our group (it's now midnight) opted for some sleep and they were unceremoniously dumped off at our hotel. For the remaining trio, the night went steadily downhill in the quiet confines of a Country & Western bar, which had as a centerpiece a worn-out pool table.

After reclaiming some stolen

money from our table taken by a couple of servicemen who had been let out for the evening, we moved on to find Rantoul deader than East Lansing during summer break.

Back at the hotel we find our two early-retiring companions have taken the two twin beds and left us with sleeping bag space in the bathroom, under the desk and near the door. Morning comes too quickly and it's off to work (that's what sports writers call covering a

football game).

We tramp around an aging but beautiful University of Illinois campus chewing up a couple of hours before our writer-companions have to start "work."

Sitting in the State section on the 20 yard line we panic as the Illini put two touchdowns on the board before Eddie Smith and the offense can even come into the game.

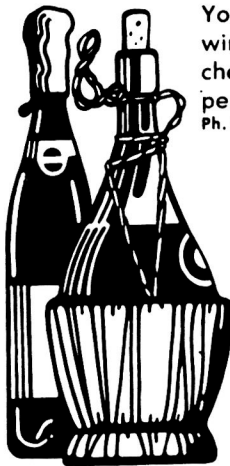
A lot of fair-weather fans start calling for Rogers' neck

and predicting doom for the Spartans, but that all changed by mid-way through the third quarter.

So the game's over, players have been interviewed and it's time to start back for East Lansing. I won't bore you with the details of the trip back because basically it's the same as the trip down only in reverse.

But if you haven't seen the Spartans play away, try it. A little advice: go alone.

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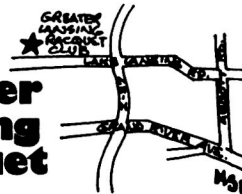
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Heathcote and Spartan cagers to 'remain on top' this year?

By JOE CENTERS
State News Sports Writer

At this time last year, the MSU basketball team had no where to go but up.

The Spartans eventually won the Big Ten Championship and 25 of their 30 games. This year, the Spartans are starting on the top and their main concern is to stay there.

MSU will open its season Tuesday against the Russian National Team in Jenison Fieldhouse, but in reality, it will be the start of the Spartans' second season.

In mid-September, coach Jud Heathcote and 10 of his players traveled to Brazil and competed in two international tournaments. MSU finished with a 5-1 record and captured first place in the Governor's Cup Tournament.

"Everyone got to play," Heathcote said. "But we realitively played with a six-man team. We went down with a purpose, and that was to get in some playing experience."

Now, the Spartans must get ready for the Russians, and a pre-season schedule (before the Big Ten season) that may be one of the toughest ever for MSU, according to Heathcote.

The Spartans will play Central Michigan, Fullerton State, Western Michigan, North Carolina, Cincinnati and in the Far West Classic before the Big Ten schedule begins with a national TV game against Kansas wedged right in the middle of league play.

"Western Michigan may be the only one who doesn't look tough on paper," Heathcote said. "But it's there and that will be a problem."

"I'm not estatic about the timing (of the Kansas game)," Heathcote said. "But if you're going to get on National TV, that's what you have to do."

"I like a schedule like that when you have an experienced team. There is a fine line between getting experience and getting in over your head."

"We could play anyone in the non-conference schedule," he said, "but it wouldn't be harder than playing in the Big Ten."

MSU has four starters back from last season led by sophomore Earvin "Magic" Johnson who brought new life to the MSU basketball program last year. The other starters back are senior Gregory Kelser, junior Terry Donnelly and sophomore Jay Vincent.

Bob Chapman is the only starter gone from last year's team which made it to the Mideast Regionals of the NCAA Tournament before losing to Kentucky, the eventual National Champions. His spot will be filled by junior Ron Charles.

Johnson will be moved to guard where he will be teamed up with Donnelly, Kelser and Charles will be at the forward positions and Vincent will again be at center.

"We have a very good starting five but we don't have a bonafide center, which might hurt us on defense," Heathcote said. "Our players are adjustable, either Jay, Ron or Greg can play center for

us.

"We can run better this year, but we're very thin as far as the bench is concerned."

Heathcote said he is hoping to go basically with eight players this season. Sophomore Mike Brkovich along with freshmen Rob Gonzalez and Gerald Busby will be the top three off the bench.

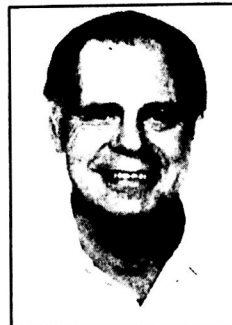
"We'd like to go with Brkovich as the sixth man," Heathcote said. "We don't like to go with freshmen but they're the best we have now."

MSU will get one last warm-up before the Russian game tonight at Everett High School. The Spartans will split up evenly, "Earvin's team vs. Greg's team," in a 7:30 p.m. scrimmage. Admission is \$1.

The Spartans made great strides last season by winning the Big Ten, but more importantly, it was how fast they did it that's so important.

"We went from mediocraty to the top all at once," Heathcote said.

Now he hopes they take their time staying there.



Jud Heathcote



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State News/Deborah J. Borin

'Tailgate' picnics are popular before MSU games.

How to watch run-away football

(continued from page 5)
run-away. You may miss some good plays, and you may even miss a touchdown or two.

If you do it long enough, you can become an expert of the MSU football team. That way, if you ever get into a discussion

about good college football teams, for once, you can stop listening and start doing some talking of your own.

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Gophers invade Spartans

(continued from page 2)

Spartans have scored 163 points in their last three games, but Rogers wants more.

"I don't think we've accomplished what we wanted to," Rogers said. "If we have somebody run 9.4, we want to run 9.3, then 9.2. If we have a back rush for 100 yards, we want 120. If he gets 120, we want 150. I don't ever want to be satisfied where we are."

Rogers may seem unpleasable, but the fact the Spartans have finally cracked the top 20 in the nation — this week MSU is ranked 17th by the Associated Press — leaves him "tickled."

Quarterback Eddie Smith and the Spartan offense will be out to keep a few records going. After five Big Ten games, MSU is ahead of three all time Big Ten offensive marks. The Spartans are averaging 527.2 total yards per game, 270 yards passing per game and are averaging 40.2 points per game.

Smith also needs only four touchdown passes in his last three games to break a Big Ten mark of 13 touchdown passes in a season.

A crowd of over 70,000 people are expected for the game and it will probably be the last time for many Spartan fans to get a look at the Eddie Smith aerial show since MSU's last home game is over the Thanksgiving Day weekend.

Right now, the weight scales may be tipping toward Minnesota. But if Smith gets his show rolling, those scales may break before the day is over.

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